

E-Government Act of 2001
Bill Summary
Senator Joe Lieberman

Federal Chief Information Officer

Decisive, focused top-level leadership is required for the government to truly harness the latest Information Technology (IT). Many federal E-Government initiatives are already up and running, but progress overall at the federal level is uneven, and the pace of transforming good ideas into useful citizen services could be improved, particularly in areas that require interagency cooperation. The bill would establish a Federal Chief Information Officer (CIO), who would be charged with providing the leadership, vision, communication, coordination, and innovation necessary to maximize government effectiveness in using information technology. The duties of the Federal CIO would include:

- *Information Policy*: implementing existing information provisions found in the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Clinger-Cohen Act, the Government Paperwork Elimination Act and other laws, reviewing the agencies' information technology budget requests, and leading the efforts to address issues of concern such as online privacy and computer security.
- *Inter-Organizational Dialogue*: leading several councils or forums (e.g. interagency, cross-branch, federal/state/local, and private/academic/public sector), focused on sharing best practices, setting standards, resolving IT concerns, designing process innovation, and developing pilot projects
- *Standards and Protocols*: in consultation with agency CIO's and NIST, promulgating (1) IT interoperability standards and (2) standards for categorizing and electronically labeling electronic information, to enhance search capabilities
- *Procurement*: help to ensure effective implementation of electronic procurement initiatives
- *Funding*: administering a central fund for interagency projects and innovative IT initiatives

The Federal CIO would be located in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and would report to the Director. He or she would run a newly created Office of Information Policy.

Federal CIO Council

The Federal Chief Information Officer Council (CIO Council), composed of CIO's and Deputy CIO's from executive branch agencies, was created through an Executive Order in 1996. The CIO Council works together to share information technology (IT) ideas and experience and to develop recommendations on a wide range of IT policy issues. Despite its successes, the CIO Council would be far more effective if its authority and responsibilities were clearly established by statute. The duties of the CIO Council would include:

- assisting the Federal CIO on information policies and developing multi-agency IT initiatives
- coordinating with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on the development of IT standards
- working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to address the shortage of IT professionals

E-Government Fund

E-Government offers an opportunity to make government interactions less defined by agency boundaries, and more aligned with “customer needs” or organized according to overall functions. The concept of “one-stop shopping” online allows a citizen or business to avoid the frustration of traveling from agency to agency when trying to accomplish a single overall task. Collaboration on advanced IT systems can also make complex government operations—such as fighting crime or responding to natural disasters—much more effective, particularly when these activities involve multiple agencies or levels of government. But these collaboratively developed advanced IT systems also require coordination in how the project is funded, which can be difficult to achieve using traditional budgetary processes.

- The fund would be used to support interagency IT projects and other innovative uses of IT with broader applicability
- The CIO Council would review proposals and make recommendations to the Federal CIO
- \$200 million per year would be authorized for FY’ 2002 through FY’ 2004

Centralized Online Portal and Directory of Federal Websites

Building on the work already done with Firstgov.gov, the Federal Chief Information Officer would direct the establishment, maintenance, and promotion of a centralized online government portal. The portal would allow the Internet user to access all online federal government information and services through a single, functionally arranged web page.

- Where a single process involves multiple agencies, a functional design would integrate the various agency inputs, from the citizen's perspective, into a single overall process
- The portal would contain a directory of all federal government websites organized according to subject matter, allowing helpful websites to be more easily located
- Websites maintained by state, local, and tribal governments would be included to the extent practicable
- \$15 million would be authorized for the portal for FY’2002, a slight increase over the current spending request for FirstGov.gov

Online National Library

Information technology offers the prospect of an online national library as a reality in the not-too-distant future. The National Science Foundation (NSF) has already received funding to begin work on the math, science, engineering, and technology education portion of this library, and will be working with the Smithsonian, the National Park Service, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services to provide online public access to an ever-growing database of photos, historical documents, and other information. The Library of Congress is separately pursuing its own initiative. The bill would:

- instruct the NSF, Smithsonian, the National Park Service, the Library of Congress and other federal government entities to work with private, non-profit, and other organizations to create an Online National Library
- direct that the Online National Library provide public access to a continually expanding database of educational resource materials
- provide that the Library be functionally integrated, so that a user may access the library's resources without regard to the boundaries of the contributing institution
- \$10 million would be authorized for FY' 2002

Federal Information Technology Training Center

A significant challenge for government agencies is the difficulty in attracting and retaining skilled information technology (IT) professionals in the federal workforce. The bill would direct the Office of Personnel Management to develop and operate a Federal Information Technology Training Center. The Training Center's mission would be to:

- analyze the IT personnel needs of the federal government
- design training curricula, covering varying levels of expertise and including self-paced courses, online courses, on-the-job-training, and the use of remote instructors
- recruit and train federal workers in IT disciplines
- \$7 million would be authorized for FY' 2002

Community Technology Centers

The Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development, and the National Science Foundation have for several years been funding "Community Technology Centers." These centers focus on providing ready Internet access to all visitors, with the goal of making online services and opportunities available to lower-income individuals. The number and capacity of these centers continues to expand; however, because the centers are funded by several agencies and run by a number of different organizations, there has been no coordinated approach in evaluating and disseminating best practices, to ensure that the centers are most useful to the communities where they are located. There are also significant opportunities to be achieved in working more closely with non-governmental funders interested in attacking the Digital Divide. The bill would:

- require an evaluation of the best practices used by successful Community Technology Centers
- improve the computer training opportunities and educational resources available through the centers
- promote greater coordination with the private and non-profit sectors in supporting the centers
- \$2 million per year would be authorized for FY' 2002 and FY' 2003

Common Protocols for Geographic Information Systems

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are computer systems that display information geographically— using highly detailed aerial or satellite photographs, cross-referenced with the data from maps, databases, and other references. GIS technology allows multiple layers of information—such as population demographics, crime occurrences, or geological records—to be input, manipulated, and overlaid onto these satellite maps to conduct complex analyses of many types. As an example, during a disaster, GIS technology could provide real-time data from the National Weather Service, census demographics, hospital distribution, and road maps, to determine rapidly where and how to focus evacuation efforts. Similarly, GIS technology can be applied to crime mapping, land use planning, sustainable development, and a broad range of private sector markets. However, government data housed across federal and local agencies cannot be rapidly accessed, combined, and used for various applications because the data is developed with incompatible standards and processes . The bill would direct:

- Interior, NIST, and the Federal CIO to work with private sector experts to develop and promulgate common protocols for the use of unclassified geospatial information systems
- that the common protocols be designed to facilitate the development of software allowing for the widespread, low-cost use of geospatial data

Other Provisions

Preserving Government Information, and Making it Accessible and Usable

- An Advisory Board would be established to review existing government standards and practices with regard to inventorying, cataloging, and preserving government information
- After receiving the Board's recommendations, the Federal CIO would promulgate regulations designed to provide for greater public access to government information as well as preservation of electronic government information
- Inventories of government information resources would be posted on the Internet

Regulatory Proceedings

- information published in the Federal Register related to an administrative proceeding would also be posted on agency web-sites

- agencies would be required to accept submissions related to administrative proceedings by electronic means, including e-mail and fax
- the Federal CIO would work with regulatory agencies to establish electronic dockets for administrative rulemakings

Federal Courts' Web sites

- federal courts would be required to establish web sites containing opinions, docketing information, and other specified information about the court and individual cases, unless they chose to opt out of some of the requirements
- important privacy concerns would be protected by the Judicial Conference
- the on-line PACER docketing system could be made free to users

Privacy

Privacy Impact Assessments:

- No agency could procure an information system or initiate a new collection of personally identifiable information unless the agency had conducted a privacy impact assessment and submitted the assessment to the Federal CIO
- the bill lists necessary elements of privacy impact assessments; more specific rules would be promulgated by the CIO

Web Site Privacy Notices:

- The federal CIO would develop guidelines for posting privacy notices on agency web sites
- The Federal CIO would develop guidelines for agencies to put their privacy notices into a standardized machine-readable format, which allows an Internet user's browser to automatically retrieve and interpret a web site's privacy practices

Computer Security

- Provisions of the Thompson-Lieberman Government Information Security Act that were passed last year delegate to OMB responsibility for establishing government-wide computer security policies, and authorize the OMB to review and approve agencies' security plans; the bill would delegate these responsibilities to the Federal CIO

Online Access to Federally Funded Research and Development

- after a review by an interagency task force, a system would be established for the collection and electronic dissemination of information about federally funded research and development
- a centralized searchable website would allow government agencies and the Congress access to restricted data about government funded research and development, while at the same time offering the scientific community and the public access to the non-restricted portions of the information, including links to published results

Compatibility of Electronic Signatures

- the bill would promote the compatibility of agencies' electronic signatures
- \$7 million would be authorized for the federal bridge certification authority, which provides a "bridge" for otherwise incompatible digital signatures used by different agencies

Agencies' Websites

- the CIO would establish criteria for what shall appear on an agency's home page and other web pages, such as direct links to privacy statements, statements of mission and statutory authority, regulations, rules and rulemakings, E-FOIA reading rooms, and organization structure linked to an online staff directory.
- the CIO would establish minimum benchmarks agencies must employ to help users navigate agency web sites

Share-in-Savings contracting

- the bill would amend existing law to make it easier for agencies to enter into IT contracts in which the contractor is paid out of a portion of the savings realized
- as an incentive to enter into these contracts, the agency would also be entitled to a share of the savings, which would be used for additional IT expenditures

Online staff directory

- GSA, with the CIO Council, would develop a staff directory for the federal government
 - arranged according to function and agency name
 - each agency would also have its own, electronically searchable, directory

Research into Online Crisis Management

- the bill would authorize by the National Academy of Sciences into applying IT advances to managing the consequences of natural and man-made disasters
- \$800,000 would be authorized in FY' 2002 for the two year study

Integrated Reporting Program

- the Federal CIO would study the feasibility of an integrated reporting system to reduce the burden of duplicate information collection on regulated entities and users of government information; under such a system, reporting requirements applicable to regulated entities would be integrated and streamlined; the CIO would report his or her findings to Congress
- if the Federal CIO determines that such a system is feasible and desirable, the CIO may initiate a pilot program with two or more agencies to establish an integrated reporting system

Disparities in Access to the Internet

- a study would examine how disparities in Internet access influence the effectiveness of online government services, and would include recommendations on actions to ensure that online government initiatives do not widen any existing gaps in access to government services; \$950,000 would be authorized in FY' 2002 for the study
- when implementing programs that provide services over the Internet, the Federal CIO and agencies would have to ensure that the availability of government services has not been diminished for those who lack access to the Internet
- to the extent feasible, the Federal CIO and agency heads would pursue technologies that make services and information more accessible to individuals who do not own computers or have access to the Internet

Accessibility Standards

- in utilizing new electronic media, the federal government would be required to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which ensures accessibility by the handicapped to new information technology purchased by the government